

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 019379

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY, CU, RQ, UR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GUYANESE AMBASSADOR MANN

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MANN INVITED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS TO LUNCH ON MONDAY, JANUARY 24. HE SAID THAT HE WANTED US-GUYANESE RELATIONS TO RETURN AT LEAST TO THE SITUATION PRIOR TO LAST OCTOBER AND HOPED TO SEE EVEN MORE IMPROVEMENT. HE ASKED THAT THE US TAKE AT -EAST SOME INTEREST IN BURNHAM'S MAZARUNI HYDROELECTRIC DAM PROJECT, THAT THE US USE GUYANA AS A CHANNEL FOR OPENING TALKS WITH CUBA, THAT THE US DEVELOP A CULTURAL PROGRAM FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND THAT WE ARRANGE FOR AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY FOR MANN TO TALK TO SECRETARY VANCE. MANN STATED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT CAN BE ASSURED THAT
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NEITHER THE PRIME MINISTER NOR HIS CABINET BASICALLY FEEL THE US PRESENTS A SECURITY THREAT TO THE GOG DESPITE THE RHETORIC. HE SAID BURNHAM WOULD BE GOING TO MOSCOW IN MARCH TO SEEK ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT AND THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS WAS HOPING TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE AS EARLY AS MARCH. END SUMMARY

2. AMBASSADOR MANN, SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM GEORGETOWN, ON THE EVE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S INAUGURATION,

CALLED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS FOR A MEETING. LUERS JOINED MANN FOR LUNCH ON MONDAY, JANUARY 24. MANN WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED TO LEARN OF THE DECISION TO RETURN CHARGE JOHN BLACKEN TO GEORGETOWN. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT RELATIONS COULD SOON BE RETURNED TO THE SITUATION PREVAILING PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER CRASH OF THE CUBANA AIRLINES AIRCRAFT AND THE EXCHANGES THAT RESULTED IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CHARGE AND THE LONG DELAYED RETURN OF AMBASSADOR MANN TO WASHINGTON.

3. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE EVENTS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING THE CUBANA CRASH. MANN THOUGHT THE WHOLE ISSUE COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. HE WAS FRANKLY CRITICAL OF HIS PRIME MINISTER FOR TURNING THE MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR THE GUYANESE DEAD INTO A POLITICAL RALLY REQUIRING HIM TO MAKE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID BURNHAM CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN THAT HE DID NOT DIRECTLY ACCUSE THE US GOVERNMENT OF COMPLICITY IN THE CRASH. MANN AND WILLS, ACCORDING TO MANN, ARGUED TO BURNHAM THAT THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER BURNHAM LEGALLY AND SPECIFICALLY CHARGED COMPLICITY, BUT WHETHER THE MESSAGE HE CONVEYED COULD REASONABLY BE INTERPRETED BY HIS AUDIENCE AS SUGGESTING US COMPLICITY. IT WAS CLEAR FROM MANN'S COMMENTS THAT THE PROLONGED COOLNESS IN US-GOG RELATIONS HAS RESULTED IN AT LEAST SOME OF THE GUYANESE LEADERSHIP UNDERSTANDING THE DAMAGE DONE BY BURNHAM'S RHETORIC.

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4. MANN SAID THAT THERE WERE THREE THINGS THAT COULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE OF U.S.-GUYANESE RELATIONS. FIRST, HE FELT THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD TOUCH BURNHAM'S PSYCHE BY SHOWING SOME INTEREST IN THE MAZARUNI HYDROELECTRIC DAM AND ALUMINUM SMELTER PROJECT. BURNHAM HAS BECOME OBSESSED WITH THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT. WERE THE UNITED STATES EVEN TO SHOW THE MOST PERFUNCTORY INTEREST BY SENDING A TEAM DOWN TO LOOK AT IT OR BY DISCUSSING THE PROJECT IN SOME WAY, IT WOULD BEGIN THE PROCESS OF RESTORING CONTACT WITH BURNHAM. MANN SAID THIS COULD BE VIEWED BY US PRIMARILY AS A DIPLOMATIC RATHER THAN A SPECIFIC ECONOMIC MEASURE. BUT IT WOULD DO AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF GOOD IN OPENING DISCUSSIONS WITH BURNHAM.

5. SECONDLY, MANN FELT THAT THE US SHOULD USE GUYANA AS A CHANNEL FOR OPENING A DIALOGUE WITH CUBA. HE FELT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR OUR RELATIONS WITH THE CARIBBEAN AND FOR THE ENTIRE THIRD WORLD FOR THIS NEW ADMINISTRATION TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH CUBA. THE IMPACT WOULD BE POSITIVE THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE AND THROUGHOUT THE THIRD WORLD. SINCE THE US DOES NOT HAVE DIRECT

CONTACTS, GUYANA WOULD BE THE APPROPRIATE CHANNEL.
MOREOVER IT WOULD RESULT IN IMPROVED U.S.-GUYANESE
RELATIONS.

6. THIRDLY, MANN SAID THAT THE US SHOULD FIND MORE
EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PLAY TO THE WIDESPREAD POPULAR
AFFECTION FOR THE U.S. IN GUYANA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE
CARIBBEAN. MANN SAID HE SPOKE THROUGH THE ANTI-U.S.
RHETORIC DURING THE RECENT MEETING OF AMBASSADORS IN
GEORGETOWN AND SAID THAT HALF OF GUYANA WOULD WILLINGLY
EMIGRATE TO THE US IF US IMMIGRATION LAWS WERE RELAXED
AND THAT INCLUDES 3/4 OF BURNHAM'S CABINET. MANN SAID
THE US SHOULD SEE THAT OCCASIONALLY MUSICAL OR CULTURAL
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GROUPS BE SENT TO GUYANA TO KEEP UP THE CONTACT WITH
THE PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT BUYING THE GOVERNMENT RHETORIC.

7. LUERS REPLIED THAT CHANNELS TO CUBA HAVE NOT BEEN
A PROBLEM IN THE PAST AND THAT IT IS STILL UNCLEAR HOW
THE U.S. WOULD APPROACH CUBA AND WHEN. LUERS AGREED
THAT AN APPROACH TO CUBA WOULD BE A POSITIVE MESSAGE
TO MUCH OF THE THIRD WORLD BUT, AS MANN KNOWS, THERE
WAS STILL THE QUESTION OF THE CUBAN ROLE IN ANGOLA AND
SOUTHERN AFRICA. THERE WAS ALSO THE DOMESTIC CONSIDERA-
TION OF HOW AN INITIATIVE ON CUBA WOULD BE SEEN IN THE
CONTEXT OF OUR FIRST PRIORITY EFFORT TO DEVELOP CONGRES-
SIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY.

8. LUERS ALSO REPLIED THAT THERE WERE CLEARLY PROBLEMS
REGARDING THE MAZARUNI PROJECT SINCE SOME PRIVATE SECTOR
INTEREST WOULD BE REQUIRED AND THE MAJOR US ALUMINUM
COMPANIES WERE PROBABLY NOT AT THIS STAGE ATTRACTED TO
GUYANA. MOREOVER, THERE WAS A REAL QUESTION WHETHER,
GIVEN SHORT-TERM ALUMINUM PROSPECTS, ADDITIONAL SMELTING
CAPACITY WAS REQUIRED. BUT THIS WAS CERTAINLY SOMETHING
THAT WAS WORTHY OF REEXAMINING. LUERS AGREED COMPLETELY
ON THE CULTURAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL AND SAID HE WOULD
FOLLOW UP.

9. MANN SAID THAT HE WOULD DENY IT IF QUOTED BUT BURNHAM
IS DEFINITELY GOING TO MOSCOW IN MARCH. HE WILL BE LOOK-
ING TO THE SOVIETS FOR SUPPORT FOR THE HYDROELECTRIC
PROJECT AND IN OTHER AREAS. MANN WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME
MOVEMENT IN US-GUYANESE RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE THE MOSCOW
TRIP. HE ALSO SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS WOULD
LIKE TO SEE SECRETARY VANCE AS EARLY AS MARCH AND WOULD
BE WILLING TO VISIT WASHINGTON TO SEE HIM. LASTLY,
MANN ASKED THAT HE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CALL ON
SECRETARY VANCE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, HOPEFULLY THIS WEEK.
LUERS SAID THAT HE WOULD CONVEY THIS REQUEST TO THE

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SECRETARY.

10. MANN MADE A SERIES OF COMMENTS PRAISING THE WORK OF JOHN BLACKEN AS CHARGE AND THE IMPORTANCE THAT GUYANESE OFFICIALS PLACE ON THE RETURN OF BLACKEN TO GEORGETOWN. HE ALSO WONDERED WHETHER THERE WERE PLANS TO APPOINT AN AMBASSADOR TO GEORGETOWN. LUERS SAID THERE WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WAS ABLE TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS IN SO MANY COUNTRIES. BUT LUERS EXPECTED THAT AN AMBASSADOR WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO GEORGETOWN.

11. MANN STATED FLATLY THAT THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD KNOW THAT NEITHER THE PRIME MINISTER NOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOR MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET SERIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT THE US REPRESENTS A SECURITY THREAT AT THIS STAGE TO GUYANA. NOR DO THEY BELIEVE THAT THE US IS "DESTABILIZING" THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THIS RHETORIC IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE POLITICS OF GUYANA'S DEVELOPMENT. MANN SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA HAS GIVEN WAY TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE MANAGEMENT OF GUYANESE ECONOMICS HAS CHANGED INTO A QUEST FOR POLITICAL ORDER. THIS PARTIALLY STEMS FROM THE CONTINUING OBSESSION WITH THE JAGAN CHALLENGE, PARTIALLY FROM ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT, AND PARTIALLY FROM THE NATURE OF THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. BUT MANN IMPLIED STRONGLY THAT BURNHAM STILL HAS THE INSIGHT TO SEPARATE POLITICS FROM REALITY.

12. TOWARD THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, LUERS SAID THAT HE HOPED THE US AND GUYANA COULD INDEED GET BACK ON A BETTER FOOTING AND THAT THE RHETORIC COULD BE RESTRAINED. WE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE. LUERS SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THAT GUYANA'S DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT WAS THE BUSINESS OF GUYANA, BUT WHEN GUYANESE FOREIGN POLICY IMPACTED NEGATIVELY ON US INTERESTS, WE WOULD LET THE GUYANESE
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GOVERNMENT KNOW IT.

13. LUERS SAID THAT HE NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS HAD TOLD OUR CHARGE IN GEORGETOWN THAT WHILE THE GOG WOULD CONTINUE OFFICIALLY NOT TO URGE INDEPENDENCE OF PUERTO RICO, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY, THE PNC, MIGHT BEGIN PARTY-TO-PARTY RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF PUERTO RICO, INCLUDING BILATERAL CONTACTS AND

PERHAPS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. LUERS SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE GREATLY MISUNDERSTOOD IN THE UNITED STATES AND WOULD NOT IN THE LEAST BE APPRECIATED. LUERS SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO DISASSOCIATE THE PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY'S POLITICS FROM THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE GUYANA GOVERNMENT.

14. MANN WAS SHOCKED. HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT

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IMAGINE HOW WILLS COULD HAVE SAID SUCH A THING SINCE AT THE RECENT MEETING IN GEORGETOWN OF AMBASSADORS THE PRIME MINISTER HAD DECIDED JUST THE OPPOSITE. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD DECIDED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO GUYANESE GOVERNMENT OR PARTY MEDDLING IN THE ISSUE OF PUERTO RICO WHICH WAS NOT THE BUSINESS OF GUYANA. MANN SAID THAT HE WOULD CALL THE FOREIGN MINISTER IMMEDIATELY AND FIND WHAT HAD HAPPENED. MANN SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED LUERS BACK AND LEFT THE MESSAGE THAT HE HAD TALKED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THAT THE CHARGE WOULD BE CALLED IN AND TOLD THAT THERE WERE NO PLANS FOR PNC RELATIONS WITH PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTIES AND THAT THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE HAD BEEN GARBLED.

15. IN THE DISCUSSION OF GENERAL U.S. POLITICS, MANN SPOKE QUITE ELOQUENTLY OF THE HOPES OF THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES AND THE THIRD WORLD IN GENERAL FOR THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID PASSIONATELY AND
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SERIOUSLY THAT LUERS COULD NOT BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE ENORMOUS AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE THIRD WORLD OF THE APPOINTMENT OF BLACKS TO HIGH US GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ANDREW YOUNG. HE SAID IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE THE POSITIVE EFFECT THIS WOULD HAVE ON OUR ABILITY TO CONDUCT RELATIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD AND WE SHOULD TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

,6. COMMENT: MANN IS NOT THE MOST RELIABLE OF INFORMANTS, AND HIS CRITICISM OF BURNHAM WAS PROBABLY MEANT PRIMARILY TO INGRATIATE HIM WITH HIS AMERICAN INTERLOCUTORS. 'EVERTHELESS, HIS COMMENTS PROBABLY CAN BE READ AS A REFLECTION OF A GENUINE GOG DESIRE FOR BETTER US-GOG RELATIONS -- ON GUYANESE TERMS.
RELATIONS -- ON GUYANESE TERMS.

17. HOW FAR WE CAN GO IN IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS WILL BECOME MORE EVIDENT AS OUR RECENTLY RETURNED CHARGE RESUMES HIS DIALOGUE WITH BURNHAM AND WILLS. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THE GOG WILL MODERATE ITS OPPOSITION

TO THE U.S. ON KEY THIRD WORLD ISSUES, BUT IT MAY BE
POSSIBLE TO LOWER THE HEAT OF THE RHETORIC.
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